

July 20, 1953

Dear Dr. Matas:

Thank you for your letter of July 14, 1953, and your good thoughts concerning our forthcoming papers on aneurysms of the abdominal aorta.

I have followed closely the work of Pate and Sawyer and was quite impressed with their experimental studies on "freeze dried aortic grafts." Having been informed of their early observations and prior to the publication of their material, we undertook similar studies which confirmed their results. Because we were impressed with the advantages of this method of graft preservation, we applied the method clinically and have now used it in four patients all with excellent results. I am inclined to agree with your thoughts on this matter that it is likely to be universally accepted. Indeed, we have gone further in our experimental studies with "freeze dried aortic heterografts" derived from hogs. Preliminary experimental observations were so favorable that we have actually used it in one patient for replacement of the external iliac artery with good early results. Obviously, if "freeze dried heterografts" prove to be equally satisfactory to "freeze dried homografts" they would have the great advantage of more ready availability.

With regard to the procedure of hibernation and its application to human surgery, I am inclined to believe that it may have a definite area of usefulness. Its objective, of course, is to diminish metabolic activity for a short period of time sufficient to permit arrest or pronounced retardation of circulation necessary for certain surgical procedures. There is some experimental and clinical work to indicate that it had definite value in permitting the safe performance of certain types of cardiac surgery. We are at present engaged in some experimental studies to determine its value in extending the safe period of high aortic and carotid occlusion. Preliminary observations suggest that it may be effective in this regard.

I assure you that it will be a happy privilege and a signal honor to read your words of acceptance in your absence. Everyone, however, will be regretful that you cannot do it in person.

With every good wish for your continued health and good spirits, I am

Sincerely yours,

Michael E. De Bakey, M.D.

Rudolph Matas, M.D.  
2255 St. Charles Avenue  
New Orleans, Louisiana

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